PS 3513
.0584
T7
1909
Copy 1

First Edition

THE TROUBADOUR

....By....

F. DOUGLAS GORDON

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

—1909—

Publisher
JOHN E. PURDUM
CHICAGO, ILL.

APR 23 1909

THE TROUBADOUR

BY

F. DOUGLAS GORDON

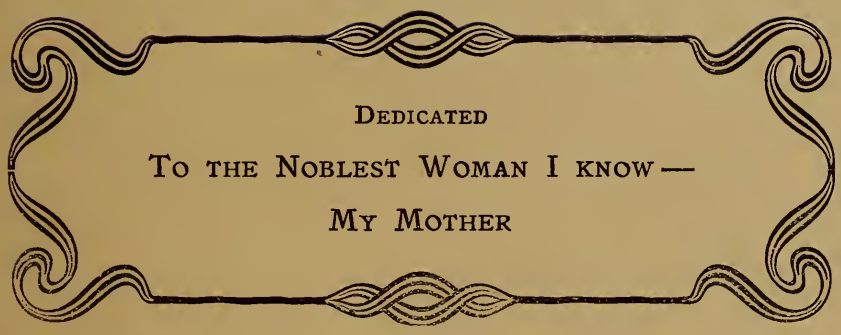
PUBLISHER
JOHN E. PURDUM, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

1909

PS3513
.O584T7
1909

COPYRIGHT BY
PURDUM AND GORDON
1909

LIBRARY of CONGRESS
Two Copies Received
APR 23 1909
Copyright Entry
may 6, 1909
CLASS XXc. No.
239676
COPY B.


Dedicated
To the Noblest Woman I know —
My Mother

SAUCE FOR THE GANDER!

THE publication of this pamphlet is the direct outcome of a little friendly encouragement at the right moment. For some months I had been planning a booklet containing a few of my writings. I had discussed the matter with a number of my friends. Meeting one of them one day, I inquired of him confidentially as to what the others thought of the venture: "What do they say?" said I. "Say," said he, "why, they don't say anything — they just laugh."

I was delighted.

It is well to have cheerful, encouraging friends.

The cold, indifferent person is a pneumatic brake on the wheels of progress.

About a year ago I sent some of these creatures of my brain to an editor in Alabama, who returned them with a criticism in which he stated that the "stuff" was crude and hinted that the writer was a fool.

I had too much noble self-assurance, however, to consider this person's verdict as final, since I had been informed, some ten years ago by a learned gentleman that he did not know whether I was a fool or a philosopher.

A word from the wise is sufficient.

Another friend suggested to me that all truly great writers preface their books with an apology, and that I must surely not neglect this important consideration. I was greatly perturbed over this new responsibility.

I felt that my efforts needed no apology and tried to convince my friend of the fact.

Argument was in vain. I finally suggested that we look the manuscript over, thinking that the excellent and beautiful sentiments might best plead their own cause.

My friend was quite willing that we do this but regretted that he was in a great hurry and pleaded that we both think the matter over for a couple of months.

However, after the most strenuous efforts, I induced him to peruse one of my gems.

I could tell by the melancholy aspect of his countenance that he felt how false had been his position. "My friend," said I, "my only apology for writing these sentiments is, that for years they have clamored for utterance and now that I have gotten rid of them I feel a great calmness, a great comfort—in fact I feel better." "I have no doubt of it," said he.

I had won.

* * * * * *

Some persons may cavil as to the appropriateness of the title of this pamphlet. The troubadour, robbed of all the glamour and romance with which the loving hand of time has so kindly endowed him, was simply a hobo with a harp who howled hungrily his more or less tunefull ditties at the feastive boards of those who could afford to feast. He was a wandering medium by which verse was distributed—hence this creature of print and paper is in the truest sense a troubadour.

THE AUTHOR.

INDEX

	Page
Nightfall in The City	8, 9, 10, 11
Song of The Night	12, 13
Ode to Death	14, 15, 16
Song of The Nightingale	17, 18
Mildred's Dimple	18
The Wretched	19, 20, 21
Bell Song	22, 23
Harp of The Winds	24, 25, 26
Ode to Faith	27, 28, 29
Song of The Sea	30, 31
Mildred, My Valentine	32

NIGHTFALL IN THE CITY

O'ER the city of the prairie
The twilight swiftly falls,
As the winter day is waning
Beneath its canyoned walls.

Where the early lamps 'lume dimly,
With blurred, uncertain light,
The black mass of tangled traffic
That pushes through the night

And the pallid faces moving
In strong, resistless flow,
Through the thicker gathering darkness
That settles dense and low.

While a roaring as of battles
Throbs dully on the air
Of the clamor of the millions
Who seethe and struggle there.

NIGHTFALL IN THE CITY

Multitudinous the shadows
The throng weaves in and out;
Never ending, ever changing,
Like winds that shift about.

As the night shade claims the city,
The hour grown later still,
From the throat of a gale comes ringing
The song of breakers chill.

Like a paeon down the distance,
Upon the northeast wind,
There is flung the gusty chorus
Of Titans none may bind.

Strong the tang of oozy caverns
Reeks dankly down the breeze,
From the boiling, slimy currents
Of Michigan's frothy lees.

NIGHTFALL IN THE CITY

Harsh the clanging car bells quiver
  Out on the frigid air,
That would swifter urge the traffic
  Above the city's blare.

While the human stream grown thicker
  From thousand 'scrapers poured,
In a dang'rous crush is sweeping,
  An eager, homing horde.

For 'tis nightfall in the city;
  The day's long task is done
And the weary workers leaving
  'Till rising of the sun.

And 'tis thus the night shade closes
  Down in the short day's wake,
O'er the city of the prairie
  Beside the wintry lake;

NIGHTFALL IN THE CITY

Whence the drowsy song of breakers,
  Monotonous and low,
Comes with pulsing from the eastward
  With steady beat and slow.

Soon the mart lies all deserted;
  The looms of commerce sleep:
And the silence only broken
  Where restless breakers leap.

Then the frost grows keen and keener;
  The waif alone's outcast;
And the city's wrapt in slumber,
  It's strife forgot at last.

SONG OF THE NIGHT

IGH o'er the hill floats the moon,
Lullaby songs breathe the winds,
Gently the gnat's wing doth croon,
Wooing to sleep weary minds.

The stars shine forth with lustre bright
As a mystic's fond dreaming,
To light the dome of sombre night
With their rays afar streaming.

'Mid ancient trees a still pool lies,
On its face dark reflected
The night wind sways with quiv'ring sighs
The soft fronds there projected.

Its moonlit face is mirror bright
For God Pan and his dryads,
Who gather there at dead of night
To hold rev'l with his naiads.

SONG OF THE NIGHT

The perfume breeze on languid wing,
  Wafts echoes of their voicing,
And drowsy brooks do softer sing,
  And smile at their rejoicing.

ODE TO DEATH

EATH the soft, chill touch of thy caress, oh Death,
Struggles not the aching, heart-sick soul;
Sweetly steals oblivion o'er the weary mind,
Gladly yielding unto death his dole.

Calmly sinks the tired spirit to its rest,
To its silent slumber gently sent,
Free from strife and care, it flees in eager joy,
With eternal quiet well content.

In the dim, dank grave, the cloistered cell of death,
Dwells the peace of halls deserted quite;
In its confines broods the Spirit of the Past
Shrouded in the lulling gloom of night.

What tho' worms in revel, cluster foul and slime
'Round the once fair temple, fair no more,

ODE TO DEATH

'Tis the common lot of things that live and die.
Shall the senseless clay in fear abhor?

Friend thou art, Pale Death, since once to meet we must,
Welcome thou to all who wisely think:
Like a leaf upon the current wanders life,
Who would then from death in terror shrink?

Softly falls the curtain closing life's grim play,
Fainter in the distance sounds its strife,
Past are fev'rish turmoil and its efforts vain.
Salve Death! *Vale* to thee drear life!

As the deep'ning shadows slowly gath'ring round,
Cloud the golden rays of sunshine bright,
One regret steals o'er the soul that loved its smile;
That it ne'er will brighten death's long night.

Yet the soft, chill touch of thy caress, oh Death!
And thy beck'ning finger lean, shall be
Welcome still to him who reads life's riddle right
And so doing longs from life to flee.

SONG OF THE NIGHTINGALE

ONE summer night while wandering far
Through wooded glades, by swamp and swale,
There came to me 'pon zephyrs sweet
The mellow song of the nightingale.

O'er nodding branch and sleepy rill
The moonlight hung its silv'ry vail;
All tired nature seemed atune
To the rippling throat of the nightingale.

The gushing flood of distant song
Bore forth to me a mystic tale
Of bliss departed long ago,
But sung of still by the nightingale.

The moonlight glancing over all
Streamed shadows black o'er hill and dale,
As minstrel forth his soul soft poured,
Enchanted throated nightingale!

With melancholy sweet I sighed
Through balmy, starlit nights to sail
'Pon rivers calm, past wildwood isles,
All bathed in the strains of the nightingale.

MILDRED'S DIMPLE

O, I know what the dimple
Is, there in your chin,
Little girl,
Little girl,
Little girl:—

'Tis the nest that the Elves tucked
A sleepy pearl in,
Little girl,
Little girl,
Little girl.

THE WRETCHED

N dank and darksome places,
With pinched and desp'rate faces,
The light of hunger shining
In pallid cheeks and pining;
With hearts that yearn and sicken
And bodies weak and stricken
Dwell the wretched.

In foul and noisome places,
Bereft of comforts, graces,
Their children starving, dying,
Their hearts grown sore with sighing,
Their souls by mis'ry shrunken,
Their eyes by hunger sunken,
Dwell the wretched.

In strange and grewsome places,
Of lives you'll find the traces

Where children lived and sickened,
Their stunted souls ne'er quickened,
Their bodies bent with weakness,
Where death is met with meekness,
Dwell the wretched.

Where rolls the turbid torrent
Of crime and vice abhorrent,
Where child and man and woman
Are more like beasts than human;
Where spirits hard and bitter
Exist in filth and litter
Dwell the wretched.

'Mid gaslit dens foul reeking
There may be found for seeking
The spots where plagues slow linger,
The dread white Death's lean finger,
Where air's unfit for breathing
And discontent is seething,
Dwell the wretched.

If only by some river
Where water lilies quiver,
In balmy breezes waving
Their stems the water's laving,
The children could be playing
'Neath trees all gently swaying,
Their childish lips all voicing
Their welling soul's rejoicing,
Their hearts all bubbling laughter
Or sweetly sleeping after;
The world would be the brighter
For tender hearts made lighter.

BELL SONG

N hearts o'ercharged with misery
Far too great for the lips to tell,
There seethes a torrent acid,
At the wail of a far-off bell.
The wail of the bells;
The distant bells.

The tears that pride would stifle,
How they sear with their efforts fell;
To burst the bonds that hold them
In mad sympathy with the bell.
Funereal bells;
The dirge-toned bells.

Ah, bells so filled with sorrow!
Can you speak but to knell, to knell?
The tears flow bitter, scalding,
To the wail of the bell, the bell.
The melancholy bells;
The sombre bells.

BELL SONG

I list' to hear thy music
And I yearn 'neath its spell, its spell
For things forgot by mankind,
But recalled by thy voice, oh bell.
Recalled by the bells;
The magic bells.

Thy chimes so sweet are mournful,
For thy spirit reads well, reads well,
The aspirations fruitless
Of the breast of the man, oh bell.
Oh, soul-feeling bells,
Thou sweet-voiced bells.

'Neath moonlit, starlit heavens,
Has my breast surged a-hell, grim hell,
At stinging, barbed reminders
Of thy maddening voice, oh, bell.
The maddening bells,
The moonlit bells.

HARP OF THE WINDS

HE murmur soft of music sweet,
With cadence mournful, weirdly sad,
One moonlight eve mine ear did greet
With ling'ring chords, divinely mad.

So wayward breathed the fitful strains,
Methot their accents voiced by dreams,
And list'ning to the wild refrains,
I sought the fountain of their streams.

As peering thru the garden dim,
I strode its em'rald carpet o'er
And moonlight flung my shadow slim,
My seeking, wond'ring eyes before,

I saw a harp by zephyrs swayed
Beneath a bough, by cords uphung,
Whose strings, by hidden fingers played
The magic music forth had flung.

Entranced I listened to its lay,
The melting cadence of its sound,
So melancholy, never gay,
A thrall, my heart had thrown around.

Its quiv'ring strings by sighs seemed wrung;
They voiced their sorrows to the night;
Beneath the skies their woes they sung,
Where streamed the mellow moon's soft light.

The evening's wand'ring minstrel breeze
Had taught this harp the art of song,
That mourned alone beneath the trees
In tones so wayward, faint yet strong.

The searching pathos that it breathed
In melting beauty, soft and low,
Combined with thoughts that in me seethed,
Bade fancies' hues in radiance glow.

Ah, voice o' the winds! thy yearning heart
  Outpouring sorrows, gently stirred
To nobler aims ere he did part,
  The soul of him who chancing heard.

ODE TO FAITH

AR beyond the realms of reason
Lies the shadowland of faith,
Where dwells Hope, the Angel Watchful,
O'er the land without a wraith.

Oh, thou shadowland so restful!
Would that I might find release
From my weary soul's dark burden;
That I, too, might learn thy peace.

Just to feel the peace of childhood,
Just to ease the aching throat;
Just to shed the tears that throttle,
Just to quell the fiends that gloat

O'er the discontent of reason
Of the man who vainly hopes
As he strives to vanquish misery
In the darkness where he gropes.

ODE TO FAITH

I have wooed thee, Faith, but vainly,
I have sought thy land so fair,
But the welling floods of anguish
Have alone been vouchsafed prayer.

In the watch of eerie midnight
Have I sought to reach thy shore,
But thou else had ne'er existed,
Or thou wouldst not listen more.

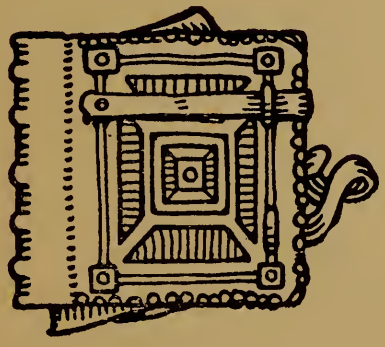
Hast thou seen the darksome river,
Formed by man's all-garnered woe,
Lit by phosphorescent vapors,
O'er its bosom festooned low?

Hast thou heard the wail of children,
And the sob of mothers weak;
Was my purpose not for their sake,
As for mine, I thee did seek?

ODE TO FAITH

Oh, to thee, fair Faith, man cometh,
  Though he strive to touch thy hand,
Does it matter what his motive
  That he get thy magic wand?

Still thy smile will lure the mystic,
  And thy peace will shine through men,
As the ages sweep majestic
  Far beyond their puny ken.



SONG OF THE SEA

N the flush and the still of the morn,
By the murmuring lips of the sea,
As the shadow of night crept forlorn
O'er the brink of the earth far away

'Fore the breath of the wakening day,
Came a sense of the infinite calm
Of the spirit that broods o'er the sway
Of the ocean: my soul felt its balm.

In the beauty and peace of the scene
There was tranquil content, and the charm
Of big waters at rest; ah, the sheen
Of its bosom shown glowingly warm.

In the blue like a cloudlet afloat
Swings the gull 'bove the waters serene
And anon 'cross the wave shrills his note
As in flight o'er his prey he careens.

And the song of the waves as they flow,
  Is of islands afar o'er the seas
Where soft winds of sweet perfumes do blow,
  Where is life in calm joy and in peace.

Sweet they sing of the palms and the sands,
  Of the birds and the fruits and the flow'rs,
Of the bliss near divine of those strands
  And the passage of swift, careless hours.

Of the past and the future they sing
  And their song grows prophetic in strain,
Like an anthem their melodies ring
  Forth a promise to me. Sweet refrain!

In the flush and the calm of the morn,
  By the murmuring lips of the sea,
As I wandered alone and to mourn
  Was a promise of joy made to me.

MILDRED, MY VALENTINE

Dreamland is thine,
Dreamland is mine:—
The night wind sings to you and me.

My heart is thine,
Is thy heart mine?
O hark, the moonlit melody!

O Mildred mine,
My love is thine:—
The song's my love, Moonflow'r, for thee.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 015 897 414 9